

Making Tracks



EU exit would be a disaster for animals, say Green MEPs



Ahead of the EU referendum, the UK's Green MEPs are highlighting the importance of the European Union for animal protection.

Keith who is Green Party Animals spokesperson, said:

"The importance of EU laws for animals cannot be overstated. I want Britain to remain a part of the EU because I believe that we achieve more when we work together on the shared challenges we face. For Europe's animals, this has meant huge improvements in welfare."

Jean added:

"The EU has improved conditions for animals where national governments have failed to act, and its influence is felt beyond European borders. The EU brought in a blanket ban on animal testing for cosmetics; banned the import of products newly tested on animals and

suspended the use of toxic bee-killing pesticides.

Molly, a member of the European Parliament Agriculture Committee, drew attention to EU bans on cruel factory farming practices:

"The EU prohibited the use of sow stalls and barren battery cages for hens. We need to go further, but the EU's record is a strong one and mustn't be taken for granted."

Keith Taylor concluded:

"We all know the EU isn't perfect, but be in no doubt, if animals had votes they'd vote to stay in. The UK Government has already tried to weaken laws on laboratory animals - this doesn't give me confidence that if we were to leave the EU, the current level of protection for animals would remain. We call on all those concerned about animals to support the UK remaining part of the EU."

Greens welcome call to reduce use of antibiotics

Greens have welcomed a recent report, commissioned by David Cameron, which calls for the use of antibiotics in agriculture to be cut back or even, in critical cases, banned. This reaffirms changes in policy that Greens in the European Parliament have been campaigning for. Greens have called for an end to the use of antibiotics as a routine preventive measure as it is leading to resistance, with serious implications for human and animal health. Greens argue that

good farm hygiene is key to animal health and have successfully argued for a number of measures to be included in proposed legislative changes. These include living conditions that respect behavioural needs; keeping stocking densities to levels which do not increase risk of disease; and isolation of sick animals.

Molly said:

"We need to ensure that human and animal health is put before the interests and profits of industrial scale farming."

The return of the mountain hare?



There are hopes the mountain hare can be reintroduced to Dartmoor. Scientifically named *Lepus timidus*, the animal is native to Britain, unlike the brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) and rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). The mountain hare probably died out on Dartmoor around 6,000 years ago when the moor became covered

with unsuitable deciduous forest. However, farming activities destroyed most of the forests, with just three ancient relics now remaining. The diet of the mountain hare

consists mainly of young heather, making Dartmoor's 11,500 hectares of heather moorland an ideal habitat. The seasonal colour change of the mountain hare has proved popular with tourists in the Peak District and conservation group, South-West Action For Hares, believe it would prove equally popular on Dartmoor.

Cautious welcome for new marine protection zones



Greens have cautiously welcomed the designation of 23 new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in UK waters, but say there are still many important marine wildlife sites left without protection. They also warn the new zones will mean little without staff to enforce them.

Molly said:

"The British Isles is surrounded by many areas recognised as having particular environmental value and it is right we protect and restore the precious wildlife of our coasts and sea. However with DEFRA and other regulators facing severe cuts to their budgets we can only wonder how genuinely committed the government is to environmental protection. There also remain gaps in establishing a 'blue belt' of protection around the UK."

UK lagging behind on animal circus ban

Jean Lambert has written to the Government calling for it to honour a manifesto commitment to stop the use of wild animals in circuses.

The UK has fallen badly behind the rest of Europe on this. 17 EU countries have national bans in place, prohibiting either wild animals or all animals from being used in circuses. Some countries – Greece, Cyprus and Malta – are leading the way with bans on the use of all animals.

Jean said:

"It is not acceptable to have animals performing

in circuses. Greens want this completely banned. Unfortunately the UK is playing catch-up, when once it led the way. The government must now take swift action to ban animal circuses here in the UK. Most people will not want the UK to be one of Europe's last outposts of animal cruelty and exploitation."

You can read Jean's letter to the UK Government on her website.

Making medical research fit for the 21st century

Keith recently hosted the launch of a new Human Society International (HSI) initiative in the European Parliament which explores alternatives to testing on animals in medical research.

Each year, more than 100 million animals are subject to different types of testing for the purpose of medical research. However, as well as the ethical issues posed by animal testing, studies shows their limitations. In particular, they provide little understanding of how medicines behave in the human body, and in many cases do not correctly

predict real world human reactions.

HSI's new initiative aims to steer medical research away from this outdated system towards human-relevant in vitro techniques and to promote further investment in this area.

Keith said:

"The Humane Society International's solutions-based approach is something I wholeheartedly support. They have demonstrated that we can address pressing health research challenges without animal experiments"

Highlighting illegal puppy smuggling scandal



Keith Taylor MEP, here with Caroline Lucas MP, wants better protection for pets

Keith has been working to raise the issue of the illegal pet trade in the European Parliament. Illegal trade in

puppies is now the third most prolific and profitable after weapons and drugs in the EU, causing suffering to puppies and their parents. The 'Protect our Pets' campaign calls for the introduction of harmonised national systems for the identification and registration of pets in each EU country, something fully supported by Greens. Keith has written to the European Commissioner responsible for animal welfare and will continue working to secure the best possible outcome.

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